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LETTER DATED 3 MARCH 2000 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to my letter of 9 December 1999 (S/1999/1252) in which I proposed, and members of the Security Council subsequently approved (see your letter to me dated 14 December 1999 (S/1999/1253)), the provisional extension of the mandate of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) until 31 March 2000, pending consultations with the new Government that would have emerged from the second round of presidential elections in that country.

As members of the Council are aware, the second round was held on 16 January 2000 and resulted in the election of Kumba Yala as the new President of Guinea-Bissau. Kumba Yala, who was sworn in on 17 February 2000, appointed Caetona N'Tchama as Prime Minister on 18 February 2000. Mr. N'Tchama took office on 19 February and announced a 22-member broad-based Government.

The successful completion of the electoral process has brought to a close the transitional Government put in place under the Abuja Peace Agreement of 1 November 1998 (S/1998/1028, annex) negotiated under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The new constitutional authorities in Guinea-Bissau, like the transitional Government before them, have expressed their appreciation for the role played by UNOGBIS, under the leadership of my Representative, as well as by the United Nations system as a whole, in contributing to the restoration of peace and normalcy to Guinea-Bissau.

In his letter to me dated 3 February 2000, President Kumba Yala, while President Elect, not only commended the work of my Representative and UNOGBIS, but also requested that the mandate of UNOGBIS be extended "for at least two years" to help his Government cope with the post-electoral challenges that the new realities in Guinea-Bissau present. The President and his Prime Minister have since reiterated that request in subsequent discussions with my Representative.

After a careful review of the President's request, I propose that the mandate of UNOGBIS be extended for one year after the current one expires on 31 March 2000.

The renewal of the mandate of UNOGBIS would enable it to continue to lend the political cooperation and support of the United Nations to the complex tasks relating to the consolidation of the country's recent democratic gains in order to help achieve long-term peace and respect for the rule of law and human rights.

Accordingly, and bearing in mind that the holding of free and transparent elections and the installation of the new Government have brought the transitional period to a successful conclusion, the mandate of UNOGBIS, under the proposed extension, would be revised to include the following:

(a) To support national efforts to consolidate and maintain peace, democracy and the rule of law, including the strengthening of democratic institutions (same as current mandate, except for the words "and for the organization of free and transparent elections" which would be deleted); and for the words "including the strengthening, etc. ..." (new);

(b) To support national efforts, including those of civil society towards reconciliation, tolerance and peaceful management of difference (as in the original mandate, except for the words "particularly during the transitional period" which would be removed);

(c) To encourage initiatives aimed at building confidence and maintaining friendly relations between Guinea-Bissau and its neighbours and its international partners (same as current mandate);

(d) To seek the commitment of the Government and other parties to adopt a programme of voluntary arms collection, disposal and destruction (same as current mandate);

(e) To provide the political framework and leadership for harmonizing and integrating the activities of the United Nations system in the country (same as current mandate);

(f) In close cooperation with the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, to facilitate the mobilization of international political support and resources for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and development priorities of Guinea-Bissau (new).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN
Secretary-General